

were near Scotland Neck 11 Jun (JL, JW) and near Raleigh 10 Jul (*vide* RD). Warbling Vireos were found at several locations. Two were on territory in *Cleveland*, NC, in early Jun (ST, JM) and 2 were still singing at a farm in *Orange*, NC, 4 Jul (WC). The latter birds, present there since spring, probably nested. Two Cedar Waxwings found in *s. Forsyth*, GA, 30 Jun (JFI) were quite rare, and if they nested, would provide that state's southernmost breeding report.

WARBLERS THROUGH ORIOLES

Several lingering warblers were found this summer. Three singing Black-throated Blues were in the Ft. Bragg, NC, area in early Jun (SCa); Yellow-rumpeds were at Ocracoke, NC, 17 Jun (PV), at York, SC, 19 Jun (BH), and in *Barnwell*, SC, 24 Jun (PC); a Blackpoll was at C. Lookout, NC, 7 Jun (JF); and a Northern Waterthrush was in Athens, GA, 5 Jun (BD). A Lark Sparrow was a surprise near Tallapoosa, *Haralson*, GA, 25 Jul (MB), a most unexpected sighting for the summer. In North Carolina, breeding of this species has historically occurred in the Sandhills region. This year several were at Ft. Bragg in early Jun (AS), and 3 adults with 5 fledged young were found in *Scotland*, 21–28 Jun (BG). The Henslow's Sparrow surveys at the two VOA sites in e. North Carolina near Greenville, turned up 140 singing males 3–4 Jun (JW). The numbers are slightly down from previous years, but the species is apparently still in good shape at the two areas. A female Painted Bunting was rather late at P.I. 8 Jun (JL); the species does not nest on the Outer Banks. Noteworthy Dickcissel reports included several in *Bartow*, GA, (CL), up to 3 in *Cleveland*, NC, 7 Jun (ST, JM), one at Pettigrew St. Pk, NC, 25 Jun (HL, JPi), and 3 near Margaret, *Franklin*, NC, 25 Jun (RD). Of the latter, one was a female carrying food, very suggestive of breeding. Late migrant Bobolinks included a male along the Chattahoochee R., Atlanta, GA, 12 Jun (ET) and a pair near Margaret, NC, 1 Jun (RD). Shiny Cowbirds continue to invade the region. This season's sightings involved a female on Blackbeard I., GA, 7 Jul (PS), a male at Darien, GA, 21 Jul (EB), and a male at Ft. Macon, NC, in early Jul (*vide* JF). In North Carolina, Baltimore Orioles were found far to the east, with one at Ft. Bragg in early Jun (AS), and a female feeding a juvenile 9 Jul in Raleigh (*vide* HL). Although no nest was found, the evidence is very strong that breeding occurred there, very unusual that far east.

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Place names that are frequently mentioned, but very long, may be abbreviated in a form such as "C.B.B.T." or "W.P.B.O." Such local abbreviations will be explained in a key at the beginning of the particular regional report in which they are used. In most regions, place names given in italic type are counties. Standard abbreviations that are used throughout *North American Birds* are keyed on page 352.

florida



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Below-normal rains during June and July, the first half of the Florida "rainy season," did little to replenish parched lakes and wetlands. The unusually dry conditions caused a birding bonanza, with unprecedented numbers of wading birds and shorebirds exploiting mudflats and

remnant wetlands at places like Newnan's Lake, and Myakka Lake. In the Everglades, prolonged winter/spring dry-down conditions contributed to a "stupendous" year for wading bird nesting (P. Frederick).

On a personal note: it has been a privilege to prepare this account for 20 years, but it's time to stop. The joys of reading and assembling all the contributions are undeniable, but we believe it's best for someone with a different view of the nesting season in this fascinating state to offer a fresh perspective. To the hundreds of contributors who provided the lifeblood of each account, and to the area compilers who conscientiously assembled reports and offered their own interpretations of local events, "Thank You." We hope you will be as generous with the new seasonal reporter as you have been with us.

Abbreviations: A.B.B.I. (Apalachicola Bay Bird Island); C. P. (County Park); L.A.R.A. (Lake Apopka Restoration Area); P.P.M. (Polk Phosphate Mines); R.S.R.S.R. (Rock Springs Run State Reserve); S.G.I. (St. George Island); S.R.S.T.F. (Springhill Road Sewage Treatment Facility); S.C.P. (Saddle Creek Park); S.R.A. (State Recreation Area); W.C.A. (Water Conservation Area); W.T.F. (Wastewater Treatment Facility).

LOONS THROUGH STORKS

Lone Common Loons, scarce summer residents, were found 6 Jul at St. Marks (SAC), and off Hernando Beach 30 Jul (RP, AP, BP). Scarcer still were 2 moribund imm. Northern Gannets, one at Ft. Myers Beach 23 Jun (CE) and the other at Bayport Pier, *Hernando*, 15 Jul (CB). American White Pelicans summer locally in Florida, but this year they seemed unusually widespread, with 16 reports from all over the region (m.ob.). Brown Pelican nesting numbers and nesting success were below normal at Marco I. (THB), Tampa Bay (RP, AP), and the East coast (SN, SS). A female Magnificent Frigatebird was well north of usual haunts at St. Marks Light 28 Jun (KK).

Single American Bitterns 24 Jun at Lighthouse Pool, St. Marks N.W.R. (KA, JD) and 28 Jun at L.A.R.A. (HR) furnished unusual summer reports, while 91 Least Bitterns at Blue Heron W.T.F., Titusville, on 26 Jun were simply remarkable (DS). A Great White Heron at Seminole, *Pinellas*, 22 Jun was well north of normal range (JF). Reddish Egrets nested at two new sites, Matlacha Pass (JC) and near Cocoa (SN, SS). Up to 12 Reddish Egrets, including one white-morph bird, at St. Marks

SA A year ago, wading-bird nesting in the Everglades system was termed the best since 1992. This year was even better: Frederick reported a long spring dry-down and the largest overall nesting effort in nearly 30 years, especially in W.C.A. 3. In the W.C.A.s alone, he reported over 30,000 nesting pairs of waders, including the following numbers of pairs: Great Blue Heron 525, Great Egret 3134 (about normal), Snowy Egret **3538** (four times the recent average for the area and including **2000** at one site, surely the largest Snowy colony in the state in many, many years!), Little Blue Heron 473 (slightly below the recent average), White Ibis >21,000 (**20,000** at one site) and Wood Stork >**1800**. Noting the extreme drought that afflicted the entire southeast and the failure of some colonies in other states and in n. Florida to form, Frederick suggested that the Everglades may have been virtually the only area in the entire region that retained significant water levels. As a result, thousands of waders may have nested in the Everglades that in other years would have nested elsewhere. In contrast, nesting of most waders in the Tampa Bay area (RP, AP), Pine Island (JC), and near Marco (THB) was generally poor.

through the period (JR et al.) and 24 at Ding Darling N.W.R. 6 Jun (BA) were high numbers locally, while an immature was inland at Myakka River S.P. 7 Jun (TE, FF). Roseate Spoonbills continued to increase in Tampa Bay, with 187 pairs at six sites (RP, AP). Another 15 pairs nested at the Alley North colony in W.C.A. 3 (PCF), and about 10 were at Corkscrew for the 2nd straight year (THB). Perhaps expected in a dry year, "pink curlews" were found rather widely in interior Florida (m.ob.), with the highest count 70+ at Myakka River S.P. 7 Jun (TE, FF). Wood Storks failed to nest at L. Jackson, where the entire lake drained into a sinkhole (GS), but numbers were up at three colonies near Tampa (AP) and a new colony of 12 nests was found at a w. *Pasco* golf course (KT). At Corkscrew Swamp **1722** pairs of storks nested successfully (THB), so over **3500** pairs of storks nested in s. Florida for the first time in more than 25 years. Dry-down conditions produced large concentrations of wading birds even in urban lakes such as L. Davis

in Orlando, where some 500 waders, mostly storks, were found 10 Jun (CL).

WHISTLING-DUCKS THROUGH PLOVERS

Two hundred Fulvous Whistling-Ducks were found at Belle Glade 8 Jul (JB, CE, WW). Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks continue to show up in new cen. Florida locations, with 3 at Clearwater 16–21 Jun (m.ob.) and 31 in an abandoned phosphate pit near Bartow 6 Jun (PF, RE). A Canada Goose made a brief appearance at Seminole 2 Jul (PB). This season produced a number of unusual summer ducks. At L.A.R.A., an **American Black Duck** was seen daily from 3–19 Jun (HR). Mottled Ducks were prevalent through the period at L.A.R.A. (HR) and at L. Myakka, where 200 were found 7 Jun (TE, FF). Small numbers of Mallards also spent the summer at L.A.R.A. (HR). Summering Blue-winged Teal were reported from St. Marks, P.P.M., L.A.R.A., and Belle Glade, but nesting was not noted (m.ob.). Rare in summer were a Northern Shoveler at S.R.S.T.F. 12 Jun (GM), 2 Gadwall at P.P.M. 6 Jun (PF, RE), and an American Wigeon at Myakka River S.P. 7 Jun (TE, FF). Summer sightings of Ring-necked Ducks included 2 on 6 Jun at P.P.M. (PF, RE) and a drake at Viera, *Brevard*, 17 Jul (DS). A female Lesser Scaup was noted on 29 Jul at S.R.S.T.F. (MC), and a single Ruddy Duck was spotted on 14 Jun at L.A.R.A. (HR).

At St. Marks, Seven Swallow-tailed Kites were observed 25 Jun (SC, TT), 16 on 6 July (SAC), and 8 on 11 Jul (JBU). In *Volusia*, 29 Swallow-taileds were spotted 26 Jul over the St. Johns R. marshes (CH). Extremely rare breeders in Florida, a White-tailed Kite was at L.A.R.A. 30 Jun (HR) and another was at Belle Glade 2–15 Jul (JB et al.). Two Mississippi Kites, one adult and one immature, were seen separately 2 Jun–21 Jul over a wooded creek in s. Jacksonville (JPC). Two Mississippis were at St. Marks 25 Jun (SAC) and 5 more from 19–25 Jul (JR). The Wildlife Commission's statewide survey of Bald Eagles found 1069 active territories, continuing the steady increase of the past 15 years. An estimated 1165 young were fledged (SN). Very rare in Florida in summer, 1–4 Northern Harriers were seen regularly all season at L.A.R.A. (HR). Perhaps even more surprising, single Sharp-shinned Hawks were found four times at L.A.R.A. (HR). Cooper's Hawks continued to increase in central Florida, with reports from three *Hillsborough* localities, L.A.R.A., and Cape Coral (m.ob.). A

dark-morph Short-tailed Hawk was seen 12 Jun at Lettuce Lake C.P., an unusual locality (BA), and another 28 Jul at S.C.P. (PF). A pair of American Kestrels was seen all season in w. *Duval*, where they are scarce nesters (RC).

A rarity in *Pinellas*, a female Wild Turkey was seen 16 Jul (JF). On 26 Jun at Blue Heron W.T.F., DS heard 31 King Rails and saw 39 Purple Gallinules, both impressive totals. Up to 19 Purple Gallinules and 58 American Coots were present through the period at L.A.R.A. (HR). The season's high count of 113 coots was made 6 Jun at P.P.M. (PF, RE). Last season Pranty noted the near-successful nesting attempt of introduced Whooping Cranes. Among other encouraging signs, 15 pairs were formed, 8 defended territories, and 3 laid eggs (SN). What will next year bring? A high count of 16 Snowy Plovers, including 3 chicks, was made at North Anclote Bar, *Pasco*, 6 Jul (PB); at Sanibel a pair with 3 juveniles was found 13 Jul for a welcome indication of nesting success there (WD). Ten Wilson's Plover nests were found at Shell Key (PB) and 17 pairs were at Three Rooker Bar (ND), the two most dependable *Pinellas* plover sites. Two pairs of Wilson's with chicks were found at St. Marks in June (JR, SC, TT). A Semipalmated Plover at St. Marks 24 Jun (JD, KA) may have been summering, while 3 at L.A.R.A. 23 Jul were clearly migrants (HR). Earliest returning Piping Plovers were 3 each at Three Rooker Bar and Honeymoon I. S.R.A. 8 Jul (PB), and one at Bald Point, *Franklin*, 11 Jul (GS).

OYSTERCATCHERS THROUGH SKIMMERS

American Oystercatchers nesting in Hillsborough Bay were stable at 81 pairs (RP, AP). Four pairs nested at Three Rooker Bar (ND) and 13 at Shell Key (PB), sites highly vulnerable to predation and human disturbance. One enterprising w. Tampa pair nested on a rooftop (SP, PR et al.). Inexplicably rare in n. Florida, 9 oystercatchers were found at St. Marks 5 Jun, with up to 7 remaining through 24 Jul (JR). Six broods of Black-necked Stilts were found at St. Marks in the period (JR), the only report for the season despite dry-down conditions. Three breeding-plumaged American Avocets were found at St. Marks 4 Jun (DS); another was there 29 Jul (WC), while 2 more were present all season at L.A.R.A. (HR). A few Greater Yellowlegs summered at L.A.R.A. (HR). Earliest Lesser Yellowlegs reported were 8

on 28 Jun and 11 on 30 Jun at L.A.R.A. (HR), and 2 at Belle Glade 2 Jul (JB, CE, WW). Single Solitary Sandpipers were found 8 Jun at Crystal River State Buffer Preserve (A&BH), 28 Jun at Carillon, St. Petersburg (PB, KN), and 12 Jul at L.A.R.A. (HR). Willets often escape survey, but 36 pairs at Island 2D in Hillsborough Bay (AP, BP), 25 at Shell Key (PB), and 15 at Three Rooker Bar (ND) were high local counts. A late Spotted Sandpiper was—you guessed it—spotted 1 Jun at S.R.S.T.F. (GM), while earliest returning birds were 2 each at Alligator Point on 3 & 10 Jul (JD), plus another at S.R.S.T.F. 10 Jul (GM). Six Whimbrels at Tigertail Beach, Marco I., 6 Jul were early migrants (BB), but 3 Long-billed Curlews summered in *Pinellas* (*vide* PB) and up to 8 Marbled Godwits did likewise at St. Marks (JR et al.). Late north-bound Red Knots were one at St. Marks 4 Jun (DS) and an astonishing 100 at Shell Key 12 Jun (PB, KN). One Semipalmated Sandpiper persisted all June at L.A.R.A. (HR), where July counts peaked at 132 on the 23rd (HR). Noteworthy n. FL counts were 120 and 63 Semipalmateds, respectively, at S.R.S.T.F. on 1 and 6 Jun (GM). Earliest returning Western Sandpipers were reported 8 Jul at St. Marks (one, JD) and L.A.R.A. (4, HR). Up to 32 Pectoral Sandpipers were found at L.A.R.A. in July (HR), but the earliest of the season were 5+ at Belle Glade 8 Jul (JB, CE, WW). A Dunlin in breeding plumage 14 Jul at St. Marks was presumably an early migrant (GM, DH). A Stilt Sandpiper in breeding plumage at St. Marks 4 Jun (DS) possibly represented just the 5th June sighting, while one at S.R.S.T.F. 10 Jul was thought the earliest ever *Leon* fall arrival (GM); another at Viera 17 Jul still retained its breeding plumage (DS). Ninety-one Stilt Sandpipers at Carillon 28 Jul (JF) were a high summer count. Single Wilson's Phalaropes were reported from Belle Glade on 8 Jul (JB, CE, WW) and L.A.R.A. on 23 Jul (HR).

In response to habitat loss (erosion) at Passage Key and raccoon predation at Shell Key, Laughing Gulls nesting in Tampa Bay moved around a bit, but overall remained stable at 15,000+ pairs (ND, JG, JK, AP, BP, RP). The S.G.I. colony increased to 2700 pairs (JG), while "hordes" of juveniles at Wards Bank 30 Jul (NW) suggested successful nesting there. Ever a mystery, about 20 Gull-billed Terns were found nesting at Ward's Bank 30 Jul (NW), with the only other nesting reports being six nests at A.B.B.I. (JG) and one in Hillsborough Bay

(AP, BP). Caspian Terns totaled 267 pairs at three colonies, 148 at A.B.B.I. alone (JG, AP, RP). This is the most ever found in Florida, where they were not known to nest prior to 1962. Royal Terns totaled nearly 4900 pairs at six sites and Sandwich Terns 560 at five, with the high counts of 2730 and 450, both at Passage Key (RP, AP, ND, JG). Common Terns belied their name with just 16 at St. Marks Light 4 Jun (DS), one at L.A.R.A. 28 Jun (HR), and one at Indian Rocks Beach 15 Jul (JF). Amid the usual scattering of Least Tern nesting reports, the three largest colonies were 150 pairs on rooftops of the University of South Florida's St. Petersburg campus (BBA, TB), 142 at S.G.I. Causeway (JG), and 100 at Ft. Matanzas N.M. (*vide* PP). Of 110 flying Least 2 Jul at the Lighthouse Pool, St. Marks, 70% were immatures, suggesting outstanding nesting somewhere (JR). About 1100 pairs of Black Skimmers were found at six Tampa Bay area colonies (RP, AP, ND, JG), including three nests on a St. Petersburg rooftop (BBA, TB).

PIGEONS THROUGH GOLDFINCHES

Large numbers of White-crowned Pigeons were seen in the Upper Keys in late May and June, while low numbers were reported from the Lower Keys. Possibly this was due to the abundance of fruit on *Ficus* trees in the Upper Keys plus two years of hurricane impacts to upland hammocks in the Lower Keys (RSa). Single White-winged Doves were reported from Key West 26 Jul (JO), Spring Hill 31 Jul (A&BH), and intermittently through the period in e. Tampa (RP, AP). Smooth-billed Ani numbers have declined in recent years, so news of 4 near Belle Glade 9 Jul (VM, WW) and an "ani species" at Immokalee 5 Jun (RW) were welcome. Extremely rare in Florida in summer, a Short-eared Owl chased a Chuck-will's-widow at L.A.R.A. 28 Jul (PF, LA). Common and Antillean Nighthawks were considered unusually scarce this season in the Upper Keys (RSa), and the latter were virtually absent from regular feeding areas near the Key West airport (JO). In Crystal River, TR had an impressive eight Chuck-will's-widows in her backyard 8 Jun, while in Cape Coral a female apparently moved her nest 50 yards in the course of a week (CE)! Possibly unprecedented was the Whip-poor-will singing at dusk throughout the period at R.S.R.S.R. (PS). Ruby-throated Hummingbirds summered at Weeki Wachee (3, CB) and Spring Hill (1, A&BH), with 3 more seen in Crystal River 8 Jun (TR) and still another at

Withlacoochee Bay Trail, *Citrus*, 3 Jul (TR). Hairy Woodpeckers have virtually vanished from most of Florida, so a pair at ne. Cape Coral 11 Jun through the end of the period was significant (CE). At St. Marks, Red-cockaded Woodpeckers had their most successful nesting season in over 20 years, with 19 birds in seven clusters fledging 14 young (MK).

An Eastern Wood-Pewee calling at McKethan Lake, *Hernando*, 10 July furnished one of a few summer reports from the cen. Peninsula in the last 20 years and south of known breeding range limits; it was not seen again (A&BH). Presumably a spring migrant, a Western Kingbird lingered at St. Marks 5 Jun (DS). Gray Kingbirds nested successfully in the Upper Keys (RSa); two at Huguenot Park, *Duval*, 30 Jul were quite far north (NW). Still farther out of range at L.A.R.A. was a **Fork-tailed Flycatcher** on 23 Jul (HR). Early-staging Purple Martins at Ft. Lauderdale totaled 500 on 24 Jun and about 1500 by 8 Jul (DS, BPa, SE). Earliest southbound Tree Swallows were single birds at Belle Glade 2 Jul (JB, CE), St. Marks 20 Jul (JD, KA), and L A R.A. 23 Jul (PF, LA). On the same date at L.A.R.A., 9 Northern Rough-winged Swallows hinted at local nesting (PF, LA), while an immature at St. Marks 23 Jul was just the 2nd July report for *Leon* (GM). Barn Swallows nested under bridges at Micanopy (AP, RP), St. Marks (JR), L A R.A. (PF, LA), and possibly Lake Rousseau, where 42 were present on 17 Jul (TR). Early fall migrants at L.A.R.A. were 1-3 Bank Swallows 16-31 Jul and a Cliff Swallow on 23 and 26 Jul (HR). In the past decade, Blue Jays have expanded southward in the Upper Keys and are now "quite common" all the way to Islamorada (RSa). The first movements of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers into the Upper Keys were detected in mid-July, about two weeks early (RSa).

An American Robin sang for the second summer in the Lower Wekiva R. S.P. *Seminole*, 28 Jun (PS). A Gray Catbird was observed at Baldwin, *Duval*, 16 Jul, where they are considered a rare nesting species (RR). On 27 Jun a pair of Common Mynas was found nesting in a utility pole in Key West, the first nesting report from that locality (JO, LM). Even in a drought year, singing Yellow-throated Vireos were common through the period in s. *Pasco* (DSu). At L.A.R.A. Yellow Warblers made two July appearances, with one on the 19th and 4 on the 30th, and Prairie Warblers three appearances: 2 on the 19th, 3 on the 26th,

and 2 on the 30th (HR). Another Prairie was seen 30 Jul at Ft. George I., *Duval* (NW). Black-and-white Warblers, usually expected about the first week of Aug in the Upper Keys, appeared early in mid-Jul (RSa). Always among the earliest of migrants, a Louisiana Waterthrush was noted in *Leon* 23 Jun (FR). Yellow-breasted Chats were seen all summer at L.A.R.A. (HR). Two male chats in song were seen at Crystal River S.B.P. 1 Jun-4 Jul for the 3rd summer in a row, without proof of nesting (A&BH).

Dry conditions at L.A.R.A. spawned extensive brushy flats, excellent for Northern Cardinals and other species. Through the period HR found 50-90 cardinals, 20-39 Blue Grosbeaks, and small numbers of Indigo and Painted Buntings on his twice-weekly surveys. Up to 5 Dickcissels were present at L.A.R.A. in early June, but were not found after the 9th (HR). It's usually easy to overlook widespread birds like cardinals, but in Key West just a single pair is known; happily it fledged one young in July (JO). A singing Indigo Bunting was slightly south of expected range in mid-*Pinellas* 16-19 Jul (JF). About 2 dozen Painted Buntings were found in the hammocks of Amelia Island 5 Jul, an usually high number (CL). Two Painteds were still singing at Ft. George I. 30 Jul (NW).

"Many" Bachman's Sparrows nested at Brooker Creek Preserve, *Pinellas*, and Cypress Creek Wellfield, *Pasco* (DSu). A male Shiny Cowbird came to a feeder on Bald Point 4 & 11 Jul (JD), while in Key West 1-3 were seen all season long (JO). As last year, Orchard Orioles were seen throughout the period at L.A.R.A., with a maximum of 5 birds noted on 19 Jun (HR). One male and one female House Finch at a sw. Ocala feeder 26-29 Jun had apparently been there for some time (CE), suggesting area nesting, while a singing male and a female at a feeder in Lutz, *Pasco*, 15-16 Jul were well beyond known breeding areas (DB). American Goldfinches have not been confirmed nesting in FL, but in recent years there have been some hints. This year a brilliant male visited a backyard feeder in Monticello 4 Jun, followed by a female 13 Jul (GM, RA).

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